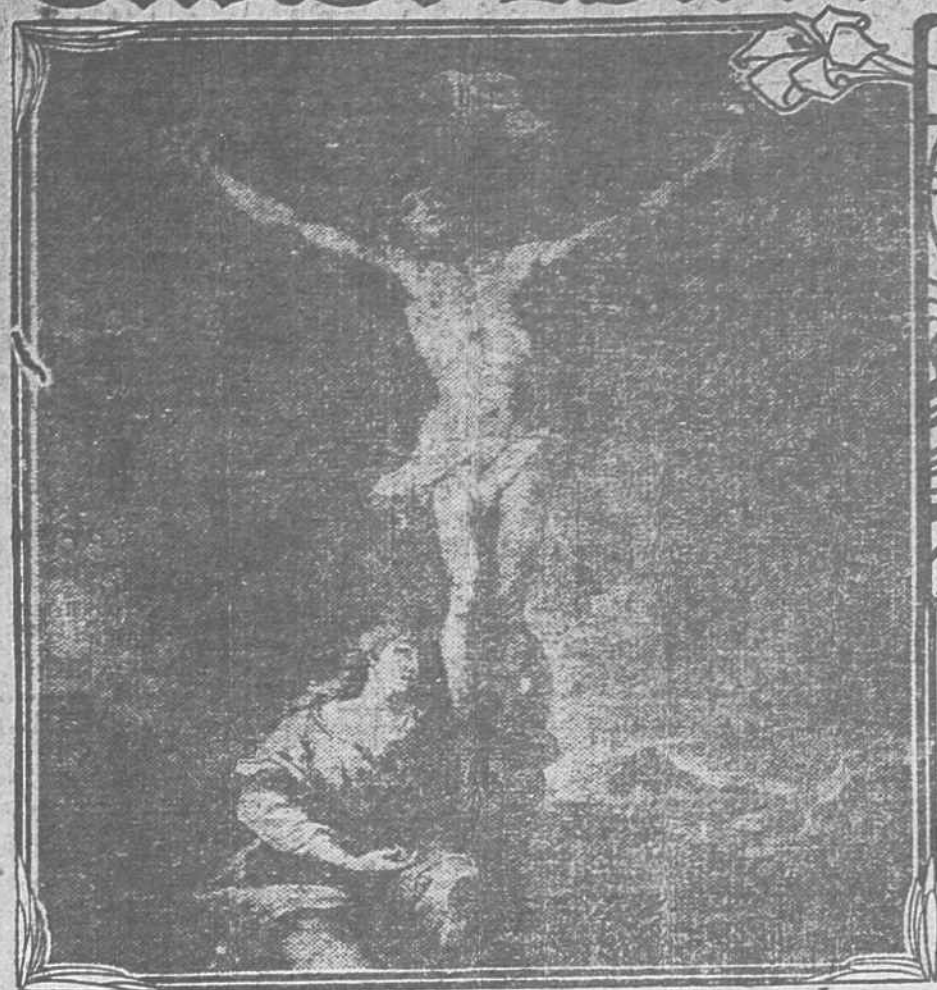


The Crucifixion as Seen in the Austrian Galleries



Christ on the Cross, by Altomonte



The Entombment of Christ, by Titian



Christ on the Cross, by L'Orbetto



The Bewailing of Christ, by Van der Goes



Altar Piece of the 16th Century—The Crucifixion—by Claessens



The Bewailing of Christ, by Savoldo



The Crucifixion, by Heinz

A History of Some of the Noted Pictures of the Death of Christ Which Hang On the Walls of the Imperial Academy of Arts At Vienna and a Short Sketch of the Great Artists Whose Brushes Produced Them.

THE celebrated painters of the world have differed in their conception of the scenes of the Crucifixion. Some have portrayed the facial expression of Christ as one of intense agony with a suggestion of angelic sweetness, whilst others have made the divine glory overshadow the human suffering. There have been differences in the relative prominence of those around the cross at the time of the crucifixion and at the time of the descent from the cross. The mother of Christ varies from a woman of youth to one of old age, although the general conception makes her much younger than she must have been at the time of her death, for she was probably sixty years of age when the crucifixion took place.

Mary Magdalen is sometimes given prominence next to Christ himself, and in some instances the Roman soldiers whilst present in nearly all are portrayed as fierce and indifferent and in others as interested and sympathetic. St. John, too, finds a place near the cross in many of the pictures, and in some of them he is given an almost feminine face. In the older times the background plays a great part and hundreds of small figures are painted in to give an idea of the rabble which surrounded the cross. The greatest attention is paid to the coloring of the clothing of the people who followed Christ to Calvary and the facial expressions. The drawing of the old masters has never been equalled, and in the pictures of the Crucifixion it is seen at its best.

Each country boasts of its own particular art treasures of scenes in the life of Christ, and each and every one has some especially famous picture of the death on the cross. A number of such paintings on this subject are to be seen in the Imperial Academy of Arts in Vienna. This splendid gallery, which was founded in 1693 by Leopold I., has frequently been recognized. The greatest part of this collection was presented by Count Anton Lamberg-Sprinzenstein in 1821, and the remainder consists of purchases by

Government and presentations by the Emperor Ferdinand in 1838. Almost every school of painting is represented in the big building and among them are a number of beautiful pictures depicting the Crucifixion.

Altomonte.
A large canvas by Martin Hohenberg, known in the art world as Altomonte, is one of the most striking as well as beautiful pictures of the gallery. It hangs just where the soft rays of the sun fall upon two figures—Christ on the cross and the Magdalen at the foot of it. The face of Christ shows peace and resignation, while the faint halo and crown of thorns add even more softness to the delicate flesh tints of the face and body of the Man of Sorrows. The face of the Magdalen, half kneeling at the foot of the cross, is one of rare beauty and is regarded as perhaps the best female face ever put upon canvas by this artist. There is something fascinating about the loneliness of the picture, for the cross stands out against a cloudy sky with Jerusalem in the background, and only the two figures—the Magdalen in her sorrow and the crucified Saviour.

Joseph Heinz.
"The Crucifixion" by Joseph Heinz is entirely different, for this artist gives Christ a Jewish cast of countenance, and groups the Virgin, Magdalen and St. John about the cross, which is rather dim with its black background. The figure of Christ has sagged and shows Him in a most painful posture. The Virgin is portrayed with hands clasped as if in prayer, while the Magdalen has one arm about the foot of the cross with her other hand on a jar such as was used for sweet ointment in those days. The figure of St. John is rather awkward and the face even more feminine than the face of the mother of Christ. The coloring is rich, especially the robe of the Magdalen.

Savoldo.
"The Bewailing of Christ" by Savoldo occupies a prominent place

among the art treasures of Vienna. Gian Gerolamo Savoldo was born at Brescia in 1480, and seems to be one of the few painters who was wealthy enough to pursue the art for pleasure instead of gain. He was in Venice in 1521, where he went from Trivisio to finish an altar piece which had been left incomplete by another artist. He was especially fond of introducing night effects into pictures of sacred character, his "Bewailing of Christ" being one of the best examples of this. He painted under the influence of Ti-

tian and his coloring resembles that of the great Venetian artist. In the picture shown the face of Christ is peaceful. His body rests on the top stone of the grave and is held by Joseph of Arimathea. The Magdalen, who is wiping his left foot, is perhaps the weakest figure of the picture. The face of the mother of Christ shows her great sorrow and represents a woman of mature years. The figure of John is the mere shadow of a sad-faced young man. The picture is highly commended by art connoisseurs

and is painted on poplar wood. At one time it belonged to the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm collection.

Tintoretto.
Jacopo Robusti, known in art as Tintoretto, painted one picture after another with the greatest rapidity, and every gallery in Europe of any size has some example of his art. His "Descent from the Cross" in the Vienna gallery is one of his best. It shows the body of Christ lying on Mary's lap, who droops faintly; Magdalen is stretching out her arms;

Joseph of Arimathea supports the body; Nicodemus is standing in the foreground to the right. This is one of the few pictures of the Crucifixion in which the figure of John does not appear. The coloring is flat but the drawing good. The picture is well hung and the light brings out its best points.

Peter Claessens.
The Academy of Arts is especially rich in altar pieces with folding wings. The most notable of these is a piece by Peter Claessens, who was born at Burges in 1612. The piece is rare and is richly colored. It is what is known as a triptych. The center picture shows Christ on the cross with a stilted figure of the Magdalen at its foot; Mary, John and the holy women appear, and soldiers are all about. The questioning expression on the face of one of the soldiers and the splendid perspective are perhaps the best features of the picture. The two wings represent the four donors as angels with instruments of the Passion. Claessens was fond of painting allegorical pictures and portraits and became a master of the Guild of St. Luke at Burges in 1570, and dean from 1587 to 1606.

L'Orbetto.
"Christ on the Cross" by Alessandro Turchi, known in the art world as "L'Orbetto," is one of the most remarkable pictures in the gallery, as it is done on copper and contains more than a hundred figures, all of which are perfect in every respect. The figure of Christ on the cross is particularly beautiful. In the distance, away up in the clouds, the Father is seen on the Throne. In each corner is the coat of arms of the Archduke Leopold, who owned the picture. Down in the corner is a tablet in Church Latin containing the tenth and eleventh verses of the fourth Chapter of Acts:

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole."

"This is the stone which the builders have rejected, which is become the head of the corner."

Hugo Van der Goes.
"The Bewailing of Christ" by Hugo

Van der Goes is an example of the Netherlands school, and has both strong and weak points. The picture of Christ is thin, and the face one of sorrow and pain. The Virgin is perhaps the best figure of the group, as she leans over the dead Christ. The Magdalen is homely, with her flat face and ungainly figure, while the holy women are fairly good. On the whole, the painting is attractive more on account of its brilliant coloring than of the drawing of the figures. The picture is very large and is painted on oak.

Titian.
The gem of the entire gallery is "The Entombment of Christ" by Titian. The picture has a charm of coloring and a wealth of beauty in the design of the figures. The face of the dead Christ shows a wonderful technique. The figures of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who are depositing Christ in the tomb, are in a position which shows all that gentleness and tender feeling which they are sure to have shown on that occasion. The mourning Madonna and the Magdalen are beautiful, life-like women—entirely different in their type. John stands in the background, and here is shown as a "much older man than usual." The whole makes up the picture is perfect from an artistic standpoint, and is one of the most valuable in the gallery.

Titian or Tiziano Vecelli, who painted the picture, was one of the world's greatest artists and the head of the Venetian school. He was born in the year 1477 at Capo d'Acadore in the Friulian Alps. Early in life he had a predilection for drawing and when he was but ten years of age his father sent him to Venice "to learn to paint." His instructors were the two Bellinis. He soon learned to reproduce the paintings of these men with such fidelity that it seemed that they must have copied his style. He soon became a favorite with the King, and Pope Leo X. invited him to Rome. At the same time Francis I. was calling him to France, but it seems that he declined both invitations. He painted about six hundred pictures, which are scattered through the galleries of Europe. He lived to be ninety-nine years of age, and died of the plague in 1576. He was noted for his splendor in coloring and the bold drawing of his figures. His name in the art world is placed beside that of Raphael, da Vinci and Michael Angelo.

Don't Fail To Go To Church On Easter Sunday